

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 2, 2009

The Honorable Dave Obey  
Chairman  
House Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health  
and Human Services, Education  
and Related Agencies  
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Todd Tiahrt  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, Education and  
Related Agencies  
1016 Longworth House Office  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Tiahrt:

Thank you for your leadership and support of YouthBuild in previous fiscal years and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. We write to respectfully request that you include at least \$170 million for YouthBuild in the fiscal year 2010 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

YouthBuild has demonstrated outstanding ability to bring the most disadvantaged urban and rural youth, who have dropped out of high school or been adjudicated, into productive employment, higher education, and civic engagement. It has contributed significantly to local communities: since YouthBuild's inception 84,000 youth have built over 18,000 units of affordable housing. The \$700 million that has been appropriated through HUD and the Department of Labor since 1993 has leveraged over \$1.4 billion of additional public and private investment at the local level due to the resourcefulness of local leaders and the high demand for YouthBuild programs.

Today there are over 226 YouthBuild programs in 43 states engaging 8,000 young adults. More than 1,800 local non-profit or public agencies have applied for federal funds to bring YouthBuild to their communities. In the most recent competition ending January 15<sup>th</sup>, DOL received 544 applications, and in 2008 local programs turned away over 14,000 applicants solely for lack of funds.

YouthBuild is a uniquely comprehensive, full-time, non-residential, community-based program that offers at-risk youth an immediately productive role rebuilding their communities. Students spend half their time attending basic education classes and half their time receiving job skills training in the construction field. YouthBuild is also on the cutting edge of education reform for drop-outs and effective re-entry for offenders. Forty YouthBuild programs have now been chartered by their states or authorized by their superintendent of schools to provide high school diplomas and to receive public funds as successful public schools reclaiming high school drop-outs. The result: young people addressing the need for affordable housing by building houses for homeless and low-income people while earning their GED or high school diploma.

  
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